Solicitor General and Public Security

VICTIMS SERVICES BRANCH

STATUS REPORT

2007-2008

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

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ALBERTA
SOLICITOR GENERAL AND MINISTER OF PUBLIC SECURITY

Honourable Fred Lindsay
MLA, Stony Plain

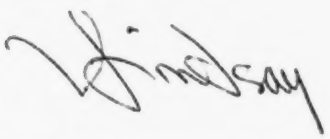
Message from the Minister

The Solicitor General and Public Security's vision and mission is to provide and promote safe and secure communities for all Albertans through effective law enforcement, crime prevention, corrections, and victims' services. The Victims Services Branch facilitates the mission of the ministry by ensuring victims of crime receive assistance, information and support, as stipulated by the *Victims of Crime Act*. In addition to providing crucial support to victims, the Branch also strives to increase the profile of victims in the criminal justice system. The Branch is working to increase awareness through its Victims of Crime Awareness Campaign.

The Victims Services Branch Status Report highlights the accomplishments of the Branch over the past year. The status report tracks the ongoing efforts of the Victims Services Branch in providing financial support and key services to victims of crime. The report further details the efforts of the two units which comprise the Branch: the Financial Benefits unit and the Victims Programs unit.

I am proud of the Branch's outstanding efforts in supporting victims of crime through its numerous programs. I encourage you to read this report for details on our programs and the results we have achieved with the assistance of victim service units in Alberta. I am pleased to present the Victims Services Branch Status Report for 2007-2008.

Sincerely,



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REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Total financial expenditures for the Victims Services Branch in 2007-2008 were $15,209,194.
- 1,048 applicants were approved for financial benefits in 2007-2008.
- A total of $9,726,549 was provided to eligible victims of crime by the Financial Benefits Program during this period.
- Victims of Crime Fund grants totaling $5,482,645 were provided to 103 victim service programs in the fiscal year 2007-2008. This amount reflects an increase of 22% over the previous year's funding. Of this amount, $2,788,490 was dispersed to programs that applied for funding in the 2007/2008 fiscal year. The remaining $2,694,155 was provided to programs that received multi-year grants in previous years.
- Police-based programs (RCMP, municipal police, and First Nations police) received 65%, or $3,573,251, of grant funds for 2007-2008.
- Community initiatives (programs that respond to the needs of victims of crime in specialized ways) received 35%, or $1,909,394 of grant funds for 2007-2008.
- As of March 31, 2008, Alberta had a network of 73 police-based victim service programs operating 117 victim service units.
- Victim service programs reported responding to 44,736 new cases of crime or tragedy; 25,947, or 58% of those new cases involved assistance to victims of violent crime.
- Victim service programs reported providing services to 60,991 people in 2007-2008, of which 51,704 (85%) were adults and 9,287 (15%) were under the age of 18.
- 2,023 volunteer advocates and board members contributed a total of 201,118 volunteer hours in 2007-2008.
- *Providing information* was the most frequent type of assistance provided for new and ongoing cases.
- *Providing general assistance* (information, crisis intervention and referrals) accounted for the majority (44%) of advocates' time.
- 13,017 Victim Impact Statement packages were distributed to victims of crime In 2007-2008. The majority were distributed in cases of domestic assault (28%), assault (27%) and sexual assault (9%).

BUSINESS PLAN

Business Plan

All Government of Alberta Ministries are responsible for preparing three-year business plans in accordance with the *Government Accountability Act* and established accounting practices. The Victims Services Branch will continue to improve its performance and services by striving for the goals laid out by the departmental 2007-2010 business plan.

Goal Six of the business plan, "Victims of Crime will receive assistance, information and support" means that the Ministry ensures that eligible victims of crime receive prompt financial benefits and assists community groups and organizations to establish accountable programs and initiatives that meet the needs of victims of crime.

The strategies for Goal 6 are:

6.1 Provide prompt financial assistance for eligible victims through the Financial Benefits Program.

6.2 Provide funding through the Victims of Crime Fund Grant Program to eligible groups and organizations that provide programs and initiatives that benefit victims of crime.

6.3 Build capacity for the provision of enhanced victim services within community groups, Aboriginal and isolated communities.

6.4 In consultation with key stakeholders, develop new programs for victims of crime, such as the provision for counseling services and financial assistance for attending specified court proceedings.

6.5 Implement an enhanced accountability framework for police-based programs and develop an enhanced framework for community programs.

6.6 Enhance training for victim service unit coordinators, volunteer advocates and criminal justice professionals.

History

The *Victims of Crime Act (Act)* was proclaimed August 1, 1997 excluding provisions directly associated with the delivery of financial benefits to individual victims of crime; these were proclaimed on November 1, 1997. The *Victims of Crime Act* replaced the *Victims' Programs Assistance Act* and the *Criminal Injuries Compensation Act*.

The Victims of Crime Fund (Fund), a regulated fund held and administered by the Minister of Finance, operates under the authority of the *Victims of Crime Act*, Chapter V-3, Revised Statutes of Alberta 2000. The Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security is responsible for the Fund under the authority of the *Government Organization Act*, Statutes of Alberta. The Fund is financed through a levy on provincial and federal fines.

The purpose of the Fund is to provide grants to victims' programs and to pay benefits to victims, or their dependants, who suffer injury or death as the result of a criminal offence as specified in the regulations of the *Victims of Crime Act*. As of March 31, 2008 the Fund had net assets of $44,702,000.

The Minister, in accordance with the *Act* and regulations uses the Fund for:

- grants under section 11 of the *Act* with respect to programs that benefit victims of crime
- costs incurred by the Committee and the Criminal Injuries Review Board in carrying out their duties
- remuneration and expenses payable to the members of the Committee and the Criminal Injuries Review Board
- financial benefits payable pursuant to the *Act*
- to pay the costs of administering the *Act*.

In May 2005, the *Act* incorporated the Canadian Statement of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime which reiterates the need to treat victims with courtesy, compassion, respect and privacy. The principles state victims should be provided with information about the role they play within the justice system and acknowledgment that victim's views and concerns are important.

Under the *Act,* the Minister has appointed a Director who is responsible for providing victims and their families with general information concerning services available for victims, how the justice system operates, and overall administration of the *Act*. The Director also evaluates applications for, and makes decisions respecting, eligibility for financial benefits in accordance with section 13 of the *Act*. As well, the Director is a point of contact for victims who feel they have not been treated in accordance with the principles of the *Act,* providing them with information on how to resolve their concerns.

Two core programs operate under the *Act* - a financial benefits program for eligible victims who have suffered injury as a result of a violent criminal offence, and a grants program that provides funding to eligible groups and organizations offering information, assistance and support to victims during their involvement in the criminal justice process.

VICTIMS OF CRIME PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

Committee Membership

The Victims of Crime Act established the Victims of Crime Programs Committee, whose members are appointed by the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. The Committee evaluates grant applications from eligible programs and makes recommendations to the Minister, who has final approval of grants awarded.

The Committee consists of five members: three members representing the community at-large, one member representing police, and one member representing government.

Committee Meetings

The Committee meets twice per year to evaluate grant applications submitted for the April 1st and October 1st application deadlines. In 2007, the Committee met in June and December. They recommended 46 grant applications to the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security for the 2007-2008 period.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS PROGRAM

Financial Benefits Program

In 1997, Alberta's Victi*ms of Crime Act* introduced the Financial Benefits Program, which is supported by the Victims of Crime Fund (Fund).

The Financial Benefits Program recognizes victims who were injured as a direct result of a crime in Alberta. It provides direct assistance with a one-time financial benefit based on the severity of the victim's injuries. The benefit amount is predetermined by regulations in the *Act.* As financial benefits are awarded based on injury, victims may seek restitution or take civil action for the recovery of costs or losses from the offender, such as compensation for costs or losses, property damage, medical expenses, funeral costs, loss of wages or pain and suffering.

In order to qualify for a financial benefit, victims must report crime to police within a reasonable period of time and cooperate with the investigation into the incident; however, charges do not have to be laid for a victim to receive benefits. There is a two year time limit to apply for financial benefits; applications must be received within two years of the date of the incident. Additional time to apply may be considered if the victim was unable to submit an application due to circumstances.

In 2007-2008, 2,122 applications for financial benefits were received. During the same period a total of $9,726,549 was provided from the Fund for physical or emotional injuries sustained as a result of violent crime committed in Alberta.

CRIMINAL INJURIES REVIEW BOARD

Criminal Injuries Review Board

The Criminal Injuries Review Board considers requests for review of decisions on Financial Benefits Program applications. Applicants must submit requests for review within thirty days of receiving the decision on their application. However, this deadline may be extended if the Board considers it appropriate to do so. The Board Chair must review all requests for review and may refuse the request if it is found to have no merit. If a request is to proceed, a panel of three Board members holds a hearing to consider the request. The Board may confirm, vary or rescind the decision on the application. Applicants can attend the hearing and may be accompanied by a family member, friend, support person or legal counsel. Others may only attend hearings if approved by the Board.

Hearings are generally held monthly, alternating between Calgary and Edmonton. All decisions of the Board are final and may only be appealed to the Courts on a question of law or jurisdiction.

In 2007-2008, 265 requests for review were concluded. Two hundred and thirty-one reviews were heard by the Board, over 57 hearing days.

GRANT FUNDING AGREEMENTS

Grant Funding Formula

Programs approved for grant funding are required to enter into an agreement with the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. In accordance with the agreement, funded programs are required to submit quarterly program activity reports, annual financial statements, and a final evaluation report upon expiry of the funding term.

The grant funding formula ensures fair and equitable allocation of grant monies province wide through the establishment of a base funding amount.

The formula:

- Allocates a specified base funding amount from the Victims of Crime Fund to police-based programs who provide victim services
- Utilizes a per crime amount, calculated using the Uniform Crime Report data on violent crimes, as submitted to Statistics Canada by all police services
- Establishes a minimum base funding award to police-based victim service programs of $8,000 per program per year. There is no minimum amount for community based programs
- Establishes a maximum grant amount of $100,000 to both police-based and community-based victim programs

Discretionary Funding Factors

In addition to the base funding amount, police-based victim service programs and specialized community programs that benefit victims during the criminal justice process, may request additional funding if any of the following discretionary factors apply:

- large geographical area/low population density
- unique demographics
- weak economic base
- new programs or projects
- other special circumstances that may be identified by the applicant

Conditional agreements are usually one year in duration, however eligible programs may request multi-year grant funding commitments up to three years. The multi-year commitment was introduced so established programs who have operated successfully for three years and demonstrated sound management practices, could budget for the future based on secure funding, thus facilitating longer term planning.

Grants Provided

In 2007-2008, the Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security approved grants totalling $5,482,645, dispersed to 103 programs. This amount is the highest dollar amount granted in the history of the program and represents an 22% increase from 2006-2007 ***(Figure 1)***. The $5,482,645, amount also includes grant recipients from previous years who received multi-year funding.

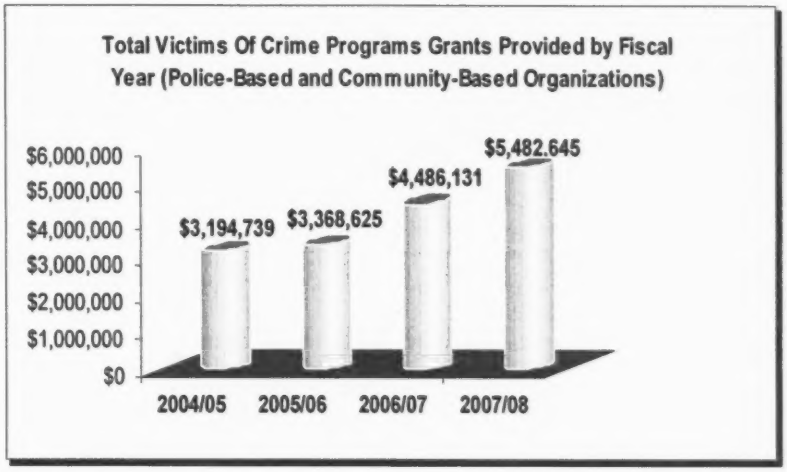


Figure 1

Police-based Programs

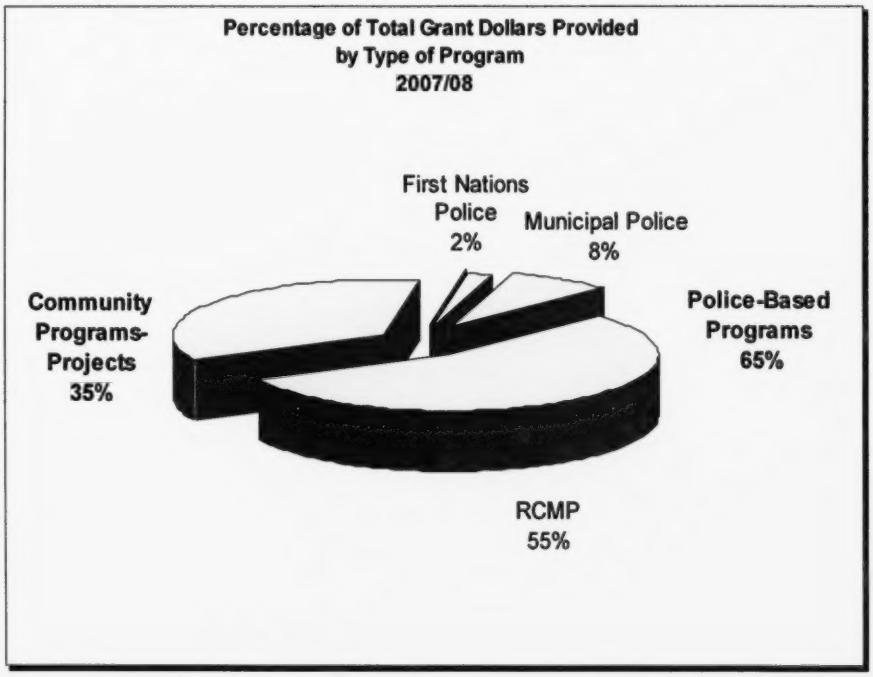
Of the programs that received funding in 2007-2008, 24 police-based programs were provided grants for a one year term, or received the first installment of a multi-year grant for a total of $1,139,375. The remaining 52 programs were awarded multi-year funding in the years 2004/2005, 2005-2006 or 2006-2007. The programs received their second or third year installments, totaling $2,433,876, during 2007-2008.

Police-based Programs

In 2007-2008 grants to police-based victim service programs amounted to $3,573,251 (65%) of the total grant funding. Of that amount, $2,989,251 (83%) was granted to RCMP affiliated victim service programs. Municipal police victim service programs received $384,000 (11%), while the remaining $200,000 (6%), was awarded to First Nations police victim service programs.

Although police-based programs receive funding priority, community based victims programs provide a valuable specialized service to victims of crime, and are also eligible for funding through the grant program. Community programs were allocated 35% of total grants provided in 2007-2008 ***(Figure 2)***.

Figure 2



Services Provided

A network of police-based victim assistance programs now provide services for victims across the province. As of March 31, 2008, there were 73 police-based victims programs operating 117 victim service units in Alberta.

Services provided to victims include intervention and support, information about their case and criminal justice proceedings, information about medical, legal, and social services available to assist, referrals to other community agencies, as well as court room orientation and accompaniment. Police-based programs also provide victims of crime with information about completing victim impact statements, requesting restitution, and applying for financial benefits. These programs provide a continuum of services to victims from the time of first response by police to the disposition of the case by the courts. Services are provided in accordance with provincial guidelines.

Grants Provided for Police-based Programs

The following grants were provided for police-based programs in 2007-2008:

Airdrie & District Victims Assistance Society	***$46,059***
Assumption Region Community Policing Society	***$100,000***
Bashaw RCMP Victim Assistance Society	***$12,000***
Beaverlodge Victim Services Unit Society	***$20,000***
Big Country Victims Services Association	***$80,000***
Coronation / Consort Victim Services Unit	***$36,500***
Crisis Association of Vegreville	***$23,250***
Crowsnest Pass Victim Service Unit	***$49,456***
Fairview Victims Association	***$14,415***
Flagstaff Initiative to Relationship & Spousal Trauma Society	***$10,000***
High Level Community Policing Society	***$54,950***
Jasper Victims Services Society	***$60,000***
Leduc and District Victim Assistance Society	***$100,000***
Maskwacis Victim Service Services Unit	***$100,000***
Peace Regional Victim Services Society	***$80,000***
Ponoka Victims Services Association	***$55,000***
Red Deer City RCMP Victim Services (Aug-Dec 2007)	***$37,500***
(January-December 2008)	***$90,000***
Red Earth Creek Victim Services Society	***$50,000***
Redcliff Victim Service Unit Association	***$10,000***
Redwater- Smokey Lake Victim Service Unit Association	***$45,000***
Rimbey & District Victim Services Society	***$32,445***
Taber Crime & Abuse Prevention Society	***$22,800***
Vulcan Regional Victims Services Society	***$10,000***
Sub Total	***$1,139,375***

Multi-Year Grants

In addition to first year grants, Victims of Crime Fund grants also supported the following police-based programs through multi-year grants in 2004-2005, 2005-2006 or 2006-2007:

Athabasca Regional Victim Services Society	***$22,000***
Barrhead Community Victim Services Unit Association	***$11,500***
Battle River Victim Assistance Society	***$30,000***
Beaver County Victim Services Association	***$18,000***
Blood Tribe Police Victim Services Unit	***$100,000***
Bonnyville Victim Services Society	***$60,970***
Bow Island-Foremost Victim Assistance Association	***$8,000***
Bow Valley Victim Services Association	***$50,000***
Brooks & District Victims' Assistance Association	***$32,118***
Calgary Police Service Victim Assistance Unit	***$100,000***
Camrose & District Victim Services Society	***$55,550***
Cardium Region Victim Services Unit Society	***$40,000***
Chinook Arch Victim Services Society	***$43,000***
Cochrane & Area Victim Services Society	***$60,000***
Cold Lake Victim Services Society	***$22,541***
Edson & District Victim Services Society	***$24,000***

Grants Provided for Police based Programs

Edmonton Police Service Victim Service Unit	$100,000
Foothills Regional Victim Services Association	$62,000
Fort McMurray Victim Services Society	$100,000
Grande Cache Victim Services Society	$15,000
Grande Prairie & District Victim Assistance Program Association	$97,581
High Level Community Policing Society	$45,050
High Prairie & District RCMP Victim Assistance Society	$65,000
Highway 43 RCMP Victims Services Unit	$50,000
Hinton District Victim Services Society	$45,000
Innisfail & District Victim Services Society	$10,448
Lacombe Victim Services Association	$12,000
(received an increase to existing grant in January 2007)	$2,000
Lac La Biche Society, Victim Services Unit	$60,000
Lethbridge Detachment Victim Assistance Society	$16,000
Lethbridge Regional Police Service Victim/Witness Services	$100,000
Mackenzie Regional Community Policing Society	$77,000
Medicine Hat Police Victim Assistance Unit	$70,000
Midwest Victim Services	$25,761
Ponoka Victims Services Association	$58,000
Ranchlands Victim Service Society	$80,000
Red Deer Rural Victim Assistance Society	$11,300
Rocky & District Victim Services Unit Society	$50,000
St. Albert Victim Services Association	$35,000
St. Paul and Area Victim Services Society	$60,000
(received an increase to existing grant in January 2007)	$35,600
Slave Lake Victims Services Society	$50,000
Strathcona County RCMP Victim Services Unit	$30,869
Sylvan Lake & District Victim Services Association	$49,900
Three Hills Victim Services Association	$8,000
Two Hills and Area Victim Services Society	$13,000
Victim Services Society of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and District	$100,000
Victim Services Unit (Association) - Sturgeon Region	$39,000
Volunteer Programs Association - Fort Saskatchewan	$35,000
Wabasca Regional Victim Service Society	$40,000
Westlock Community Victim Services Unit Association	$24,488
Wetaskiwin & District Victim Services Society	$83,200
Sub Total	$2,433,876

Total Grants Provided for Police -based Programs

Total Grants Provided to Police-Based Programs in 2007/2008	$3,573,251

Community Programs

In keeping with the Ministry Business Plan, Victims Services Branch works with community groups to build capacity for the provision of enhanced victim services by community groups. Community-based victim service programs respond to the needs of victims of crime in specialized ways. The types of victims who may require specialized services include children, intimate partners, senior citizens, mentally or physically challenged people, sexual assault, gender diverse, immigrant and Aboriginal groups. Community-based programs specialize in their field of service delivery and respond effectively to the needs of victims either for a specific period of time or during the entire continuum of the criminal justice process.

Grants Provided for Community Programs

In 2007-2008 the following community programs received grants:

Alberta Police-Based Victim Services Association ***$100,000***

The Alberta Police-Based VictimServices Association (APBVSA) is an umbrella organization to which most police-based victim service programs belong. APBVSA provides training to members and other stakeholders; serves as a communication channel between their membership and Solicitor General and Public Security; supports an interactive web site that provides information and facilitates communication between victim programs; and supports public awareness of victim services. APBVSA recently produced a public awareness DVD which describes the services available to victims by victim programs.

Alliance to End Violence Society of Calgary ***$88,050***

The Alliance to End Violence (AEV) was established in 1991, and is made up of four previously independent organizations whose mission is to strengthen community capacity and support a seamless continuum of services that prevent family, sexual and other forms of interpersonal violence and abuse. In the Spring of 2007, AEV formed a working group to look at developing a coordinated response model for victims of elder abuse in Calgary. Objectives included raising awareness, engaging stakeholder support in identifying gaps, and building support to develop response models. Grant funds were used to create a Community Response Group made up of police members, justice practitioners and community stakeholders that will develop a coordinated response to assisting older adults experiencing abuse in Calgary.

ASSIST Community Services Centre ***$80,000***

ASSIST Community Services Centre was established in 1977 to address the needs of Edmonton's Chinese population. In 2003, ASSIST established the Responding to Victims of Crime in the Chinese Community Program in partnership with the Edmonton John Howard Society Family Violence Prevention Centre (EJHFVHC). This program provides outreach services to Chinese victims of family violence and assists witnesses through the court process. Because of their success, ASSIST has been asked to help replicate the Chinese model in other ethnic communities. Grant funding was used to support staff positions allowing for the continued provision of outreach services to family violence victims in the Chinese community.

Grants Provided for Community Programs

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse Society ***$100,000***

Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse (CCASA) is the primary sexual assault and sexual abuse crisis and education provider in Calgary and surrounding area. The organization runs five programs aimed at building community awareness of sexual assault/abuse and reducing the related trauma: Counseling, Volunteer, Police and Court Support, and Outreach and Education. CCASA is a member of the Calgary Sexual Assault Response Team (CSART), made up of crisis counselors, doctors and nurses trained in sexual assault care, the Calgary Police Service and RCMP with representatives from the Crown prosecutor's office. CCASA's goal is to improve services for victims in rural communities by examining first responses by sexual assault and medical professionals in rural communities surrounding Calgary.

Calgary Legal Guidance Association ***$100,000***

Calgary Legal Guidance Association has been operating since 1971 and has grown to offer numerous programs, such as Court Preparation and Restraining Order Program (CPROP), to low or no income Calgary and area residents. CPROP offers victims of domestic violence legal information and social/ emotional support under one roof. Due to Calgary's burgeoning population, a greater awareness of domestic violence issues, and new referrals from rural victim service units south of Red Deer, CPROP's workload has increased substantially. In addition to their CPROP program, staff regularly present at workshops and training sessions conducted for victim service volunteers and other service providers in Calgary and surrounding areas.

Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse ***$100,000***

The Canadian Society for the Investigation of Child Abuse was formed in 1985 and remains committed to supporting professionals, communities, child victim/ witnesses and their families during their involvement with the criminal justice process. The Society continues to maximize the effectiveness of the investigative and criminal prosecution systems and to minimize the trauma to victims and their families. In 2005, CSICA developed a distance court preparation program. This web based program is now being used for live training of victim service coordinators in Southern Alberta, and is also used for live online court preparation featuring two games to educate children about the court process.

Catholic Social Services ***$100,000***

Elderly Adult Resource Services (EARS) began operation on in 1989 as an Edmonton-based Catholic Social Services program that offered 24 hour social worker intervention response to seniors experiencing abuse. EARS provides a continuum of services from prevention to intervention that includes collaboration between EARS' caseworkers and the Edmonton Protection Order Program, Edmonton Police Victim Services Unit and Crown prosecutors. EARS continues to see an increase in the number of seniors seeking protection from family members.

Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter Society ***$84,430***

The Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter Society's main focus is the Domestic Violence Court Case Coordination Project which operates in Red Deer, Sylvan Lake, Rimbey, Innisfail and Lacombe. In phase one of the project,

Grants Provided for Community Programs

a social worker facilitates crisis intervention and safety planning with victims of domestic violence the day following the offence. In the second phase of the project, staff assist victims with docket appearances, ensuring appearance, explaining procedures and providing victim information to key justice partners. The program will provide training to the RCMP regarding domestic violence matters and development of a how-to manual for rural communities covering enhanced domestic violence responses.

Changing Together - A Centre for Immigrant Women Association $70,000
Founded in 1984, Changing Together - A Centre for Immigrant Women is a non-profit, charitable organization operated by immigrant women for immigrant women. In 2004, the Centre began providing services to victims of human trafficking. The program has developed a coordinated response to victims of human trafficking in Alberta and provides general education and public awareness of the issue of human trafficking across the province.

Family Law Office $100,000
The Family Law Office is designed to improve access to justice for family law litigants with limited financial resources. As well as improving access to justice, the mandate of the Family Law Offices is to provide services in a cost effective manner and to assist clients in a holistic way. To better respond to family violence issues, the Family Law Office initiated the Edmonton Protection Order Program (EPOP) in 2004. EPOP provides front line information and support services for victims seeking Emergency Protection Orders (EPO). Victims Services Branch encouraged rural victim service units north of Red Deer to refer clients with EPOs to the Family Law Office in Edmonton for legal assistance with Review Hearings.

HomeFront Society for the Prevention of Domestic Violence $100,000
HomeFront is a coordinated justice-community response that addresses the issue of domestic violence within the Calgary municipal area. HomeFront utilizes partnerships within the law enforcement/criminal justice systems and numerous community agencies to provide a continuum of services to families in Calgary impacted by domestic violence. HomeFront provides services through three programs: Early Intervention and Outreach, the Specialized Domestic Violence Court Program, and the Partner Support Program.

Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council Victim Services $100,000
The Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council Victim Services provides victim assistance services to five diverse First Nation communities located on the shores of Lesser Slave Lake. The grant funds allow the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council to continue to provide victim services in a manner sensitive to Aboriginal culture, spirituality, religious customs and languages. The five Aboriginal First Nations that Slave Lake Victim Services assist have differing customs and cultures; consequently, victim advocates are needed from each community to provide culturally appropriate services.

Grants Provided for Community Programs

Multicultural Handicrafts Training and Friendship Society of Edmonton ***$64,000***

The Multicultural Handicraft Training and Friendship Society (MHTFS) assists immigrant and refugee women from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. MHTFS works towards the successful integration and participation of newcomers to Canada by providing settlement services, language training, family supports, interpretation and translation services, health advice, volunteer and seniors programs. MHTFS is modeling their program after ASSIST which provides appropriate cultural and linguistic services to women in the South Asian community who are experiencing domestic violence.

Northeast Regional Victim Services Conference ***$6,113***

Northeast Regional Victim Services was formed in 1994 to provide a regional forum and association for 12 Victim Service Units in north-eastern Alberta. The goals of this organization are to collaborate on regional initiatives, share information, address common issues and maintain a high level of professionalism for member programs with a focus on the front line volunteer advocates. The 2008 conference was held in April at the St. Edouard Renewal Centre.

Providing Assistance, Counselling and Education ***$28,000***

Providing Assistance, Counselling and Education (P.A.C.E) is located in Grande Prairie and provides service to individuals and communities dealing with sexual assault/abuse in north-western Alberta. P.A.C.E provides standardized crisis intervention training programs to community members, front line workers and volunteers. Among other services, P.A.C.E. provides therapy for child and adult survivors of sexual abuse; family counselling for youth at risk and their families; a twenty-four hour sexual assault help line; suicide prevention programs and a court support program.

Project KARE ***$82,000***

RCMP "K" Division established Project KARE to investigate the deaths and disappearance of high risk life-style persons in Alberta and to minimize the risk of further homicides within that life style segment. The goal of Project KARE is to ensure that support and timely information are shared with victims' loved ones. The program's workload has increased since inception and is expected to increase further since a recent high profile trial led to the conviction of a person in the death of an Edmonton woman involved in the sex trade.

SAFFRON: Strathcona Sexual Assault Centre ***$20,000***

SAFFRON was formed in 2000 to provide support for victims of sexual violence and their significant others. SAFFRON has developed protocols for agencies who deal with victims of sexual abuse and assault. Previous grant funding allowed SAFFRON to provide protocol training to agencies who may encounter sexual assault victims in Strathcona County. SAFFRON will focus on training the medical community, including physicians, nurses, dentists, chiropractors, physiotherapists and others to raise awareness of sexual violence issues.

Grants Provided for Community Programs

Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton ***$78,730***

The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE) began as a community initiative in 1975 to empower individuals affected by sexual assault and empower communities to take action against sexual violence. The Diversity Outreach & Intake/Court Support Program is the result of a six-year study that emphasized the need to strengthen relationships with diverse communities (First Nations, persons with disabilities, gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and trans-gendered individuals) in Edmonton.

Siksika Crisis Response Team ***$83,800***

Siksika Crisis Response Team (SCRT) was formed in 1997 in response to an increase of suicides in the Siksika Nation. SCRT provides a twenty-four hour emergency telephone line to offer emotional support and referrals to callers in need. Since its formation, SCRT has expanded its services to all crisis matters in the community such as domestic incidents and victims of crime, both over the telephone and on an outcall basis. Funding has allowed the program to hire a full-time victim services coordinator; train with Tsuu T'ina Victim Service Unit; recruit volunteer advocates; conduct public awareness initiatives; and provide services to victims.

Southern Alberta Regional Conference Committee ***$28,992***

Since 1997, police-based victim service units from southern Alberta have organized an annual conference for volunteer advocates, board members, coordinators and police liaisons. The conference provides an informal setting for southern Alberta members to network, share information and learn more about relevant issues facing victims. The 2008 Regional Conference was held at the Banff Centre in April. Topics included: Child Internet Pornography, How the Body Responds to Trauma, Emergency Protection Orders (EPO's) and Restraining Orders, Abuse and Same Sex Partners, Setting Boundaries in Domestic Violence, Migrant Workers and Abuse. Approximately 230 victim service providers attended the Southern Alberta Conference.

Victims of Homicide of Edmonton Support Society ***$35,000***

Victims of Homicide (VOH) is an Edmonton-based self-help group founded in 1995 to offer emotional support and information about surviving the loss of a loved one to homicide. The program seeks to increase public awareness and increase their capacity as a referral resource. They also serve as a community educational resource by providing presentations to victim service units, conferences, front line workers and the public regarding members' experiences. In April 2008, VOH hosted a conference, Victim Support and Awareness 2007-2008, aimed at the media, survivors of victims of homicide, stakeholders in the provincial justice system, and other service providers to victims of crime and trauma. Victims of Homicide is the only organization of its kind in Alberta and has generated interest and support across the province.

Grants Provided for Community Programs

Zebra Child Protection Centre Society ***$100,000***

Located in Edmonton, the Zebra Centre is based on a multi-disciplinary model of care for child physical and sexual abuse victims. Zebra's Child Advocacy Program is staffed by volunteer advocates who maintain continuity with victims and caregivers throughout their involvement with the criminal justice process. Advocates also conduct support assessments to determine the appropriate level of assistance. The Centre plans on expanding its program and will use their grant to expand advocate visits to clients homes. Exploratory plans are underway to locate a larger space for the Centre that will accommodate additional child friendly spaces, more space for investigators and advocates, a mock courtroom, an expanded training area and a wellness centre.

Sub Total ***$1,649,115***

Victims of Crime Fund grants supported the following community programs which received multi-year grants in either 2004-2005, 2005-2006, or 2006-2007:

Community Initiatives Against Family Violence	***$25,000***
Crisis Centre	***$44,000***
Edmonton John Howard Society	***$100,000***
Lloydminster Sexual Assault & Information Centre	***$30,000***
Tsuu T'ina Nation Stoney Corrections Society	***$61,279***
Sub Total	***$260,279***
Total Grants Approved or Provided to Community Programs in 2007-2008	***$1,909,394***
Total Grants Approved for Police-Based Programs in 2007-2008	***$3,573,251***
Total Grants Provided in 2007-2008	***$5,482,645***

PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Introduction

Information on the 2007-2008 activities of victim service programs was collected using the Quarterly Report Form. The Report Form collects information on the number of new cases, the number of persons assisted, and the type of assistance provided. For each of these variables, the Report Form categorizes assistance provided as either:

- *Criminal Code – Violent* (e.g. homicide, violent sex offences, serious assaults, domestic violence, etc.)
- *Criminal Code – Non-violent* (e.g. forgery, fraud, theft, etc.)
- *Offence Non-criminal* (offences that do not fall within the *Criminal Code of Canada*, i.e., Provincial Statute Offences)
- *Assistance – No offence* (e.g. non-criminal sudden death, notifying next-of-kin, motor vehicle collisions, suicide, etc.).

The Report Form quantifies:

- the number of Victim Impact Statements distributed to victims of crime
- the number of Victim Impact Statement Notification Forms that have been completed and forwarded to the Court and Crown prosecutor
- the number of Requests for Restitution completed and forwarded to Crown prosecutor offices
- the number of *Victim of Crime Protocol* documents distributed to victims
- volunteer statistics including the number of advocates, the hours volunteered, the type of activities performed and staffing level information.

The Report also collects statistics on victim referrals to victim service units, whether from police or other sources.

New Cases

Victim service programs reported responding to 44,736 new cases during the 2007-2008 fiscal year, a 3% increase compared to 2006-2007.

New Cases by Types of Offences 2007/2008

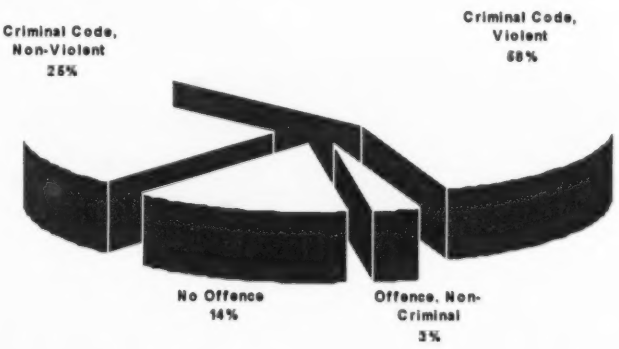


Figure 3

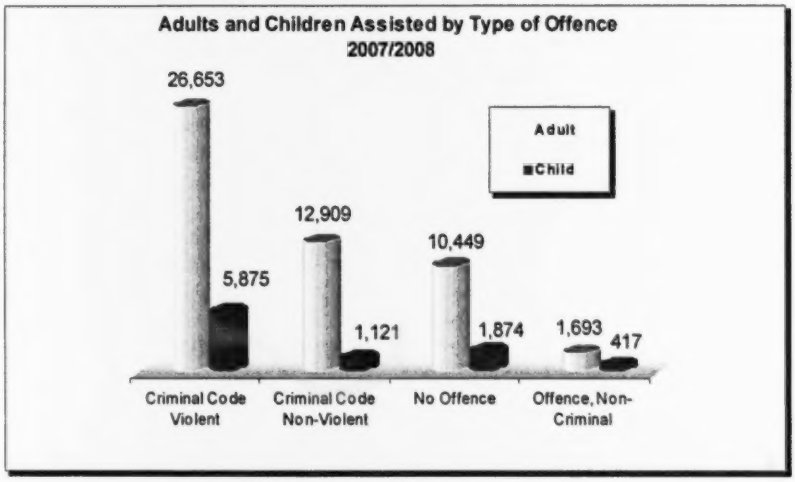
Program Activity

New cases refer only to files opened during the reporting quarter. A case may involve multiple victims and family members or friends affected by a criminal incident. Of the 44,736 new cases, slightly more than half (58%) involved assisting victims of *Violent Criminal Code* offences (***Figure 3***). Assistance was provided least often (3%) when the offence was *Non-criminal.*

Persons Assisted

Programs reported providing assistance to 60,991 people, a 1% increase compared to 2006/2007. Of persons assisted during this period, 51,704 (85%) were adults and 9,287 (15%) were under the age of 18. Fifty-eight percent of people assisted were victims of a *Violent Criminal Code* offence, while another 25% were victims of *Non-violent Criminal Code* offences ***(Figure 4)***.

Figure 4



Compared to 2006-2007, there was a 3% increase in persons assisted who were victims of a *Violent Criminal Code* offence, and a 13% increase in persons assisted in relation to a non-criminal offence. Persons assisted in the *No Offence* category remained unchanged from 2006-2007, and there was a 7% decrease in persons assisted who were victims of a *Non-violent Criminal Code* offence. An increase in persons assisted does not necessarily indicate an increase in crime, but may reflect an increasing awareness of their services.

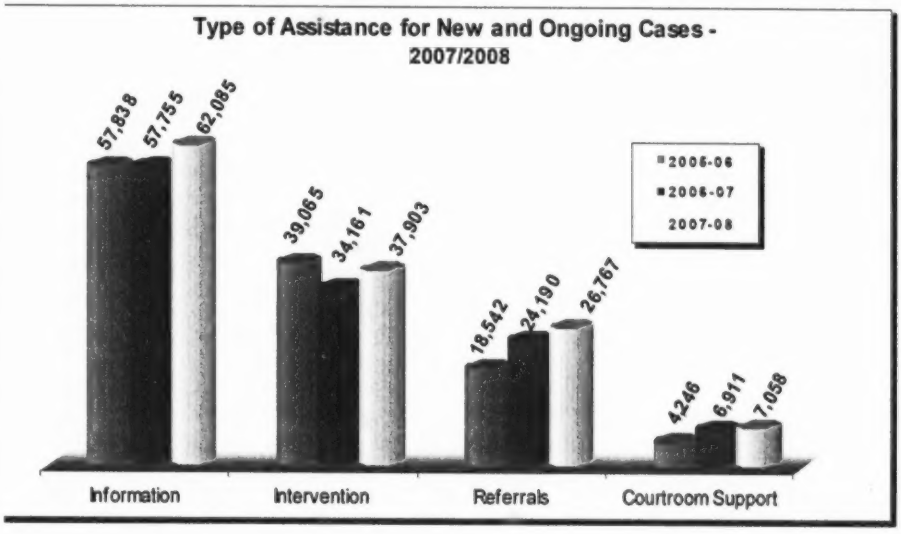
Type of Assistance

Providing information was the type of assistance most frequently reported for new and ongoing cases (62,085), a 7% increase over 2006-2007 ***(Figure 5)***. The *Intervention* category, which includes crisis response, notification of next of kin, or practical assistance at a crime scene, was the second most common type of assistance reported (37,903 cases) a 3% decrease from 2006-2007. *Referrals to other Agencies (*26,767 cases) increased by 11% from 2006-2007.

Program Activity

Court Room support was provided in 7,058 cases primarily involving violent *Criminal Code* matters, a 2% increase over last year.

Figure 5



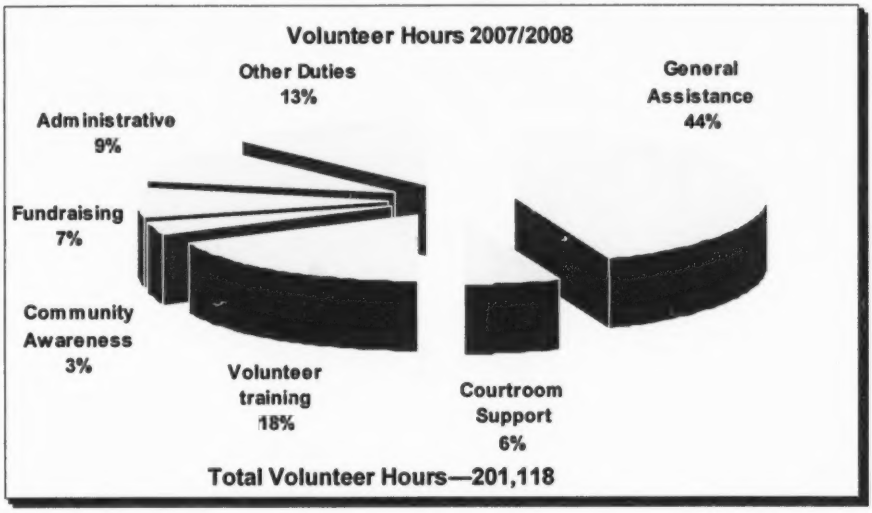
Volunteers

The dedication of volunteers in assisting victims of crime is vital to the success of the Ministry's mandate to ensure that victims of crime have timely access to information and services while they are involved in the criminal justice system. Volunteers donate their time in differing capacities to either police-based or community-based victim service programs.

In keeping with the Alberta tradition of a high rate of volunteerism, over 2,000 victim assistance volunteers, including advocates, coordinators, board members and support workers help victims who most often are complete strangers. They consistently conduct their volunteer duties with professionalism, integrity and caring and compassion. Without these committed members of the community, assistance and services for crime victims in Alberta could not exist.

In 2007-2008, volunteers contributed a total of 201,118 hours, a decrease of 4% from the 208,235 hours volunteered during 2006-2007, while the number of volunteers has increased 13% from 1,767 to 2,023.

Figure 6



Volunteer Hours

Forty-four percent of those hours were spent providing general assistance (information, intervention and referrals) to victims of crime. Eighteen percent of volunteer hours were dedicated to volunteer training, followed by other duties (travel, meetings) at 13%. Remaining volunteer hours were spent on administrative duties (9%), court room support (6%), fundraising (7%), and raising community awareness (3%) ***(Figure 6).***

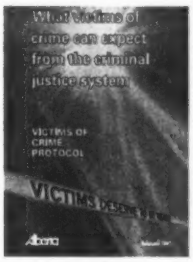
As in past years, the distribution of volunteer hours between categories did not vary significantly from the previous year.

SOLICITOR GENERAL AND PUBLIC SECURITY VICTIMS SERVICES INITIATIVES

Initiatives

In addition to the activities performed by police-based and community victim assistance programs, and the services provided by the Victims Services Branch, a number of initiatives have been implemented to enhance the experience of victims of crime as they navigate the criminal justice system. Most of these programs and projects were achieved with assistance from our stakeholders, including victim assistance organizations, municipal and First Nations police services, the RCMP, Alberta Justice and Attorney General and the Alberta Police-based Victim Services Association.

Victims of Crime Protocol: What Victims Can Expect from the Criminal Justice System



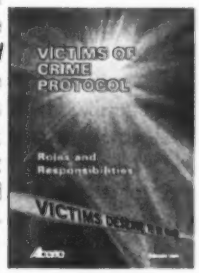
The ***Victims of Crime Protocol: What Victims Can Expect From The Criminal Justice System*** is a reference manual for victims of crime. The *Protocol* assists victims by outlining what role each component within the criminal justice system plays from the time a crime is reported and during the police investigation and court proceedings. Information on provincial and federal corrections and the National Parole Board is included as well, in the event the accused is found guilty. In addition, the *Protocol* explains what is expected of victims when dealing with the criminal justice system.

The *Protocol* was developed in response to a recommendation in the *Report of the Alberta Victims of Crime Consultation* and through input from victims of crime, police services, victim service programs, crown prosecutors, court services, community agencies, the judiciary, sheriffs, the Office of the Medical Examiner, military police, Correctional Service of Canada and the National Parole Board.

The *Victims of Crime Protocol* reflects the strong commitment of the Government of Alberta to treat victims of crime with courtesy, respect and compassion; to protect their safety and privacy; and to provide timely and useful information to victims while they are in contact with the criminal justice system. The *Protocol* is the first of its kind in Canada and has attracted national and international interest. Over 42,000 copies of the protocol were distributed to programs in 2006-2007, and an additional 5,000 copies were reprinted and distributed in 2007-2008.

Victims of Crime Protocol: Roles and Responsibilities

A companion document to the *Victims of Crime Protocol* is the *Victims of Crime Protocol: Roles and Responsibilities.* While the *Protocol* is designed for victims of crime, the *Roles and Responsibilities* document was written for staff within the criminal justice system. The document outlines what is expected of professionals in the justice system as they work with victims of crime. Over 4,000 copies of this document were printed in 2006-2007, with an additional 2,000 printed and distributed to various stakeholders across Alberta in 2007-2008.



Victim Impact Statement Program

The Victim Impact Statement Program provides victims in Alberta with an opportunity to have input into sentencing by describing in writing, to the Court, how they have been affected by the crime.

Police are required to notify all victims of crime about the victim impact statement and provide information on where the Victim Impact Statement Form and information to complete it can be obtained.

Prior to sentencing, the Court is required to inquire if the victim has been advised of their opportunity to prepare a statement and may adjourn proceedings to permit the victim time to prepare a statement. Victims have the option of reading their statement aloud in court.

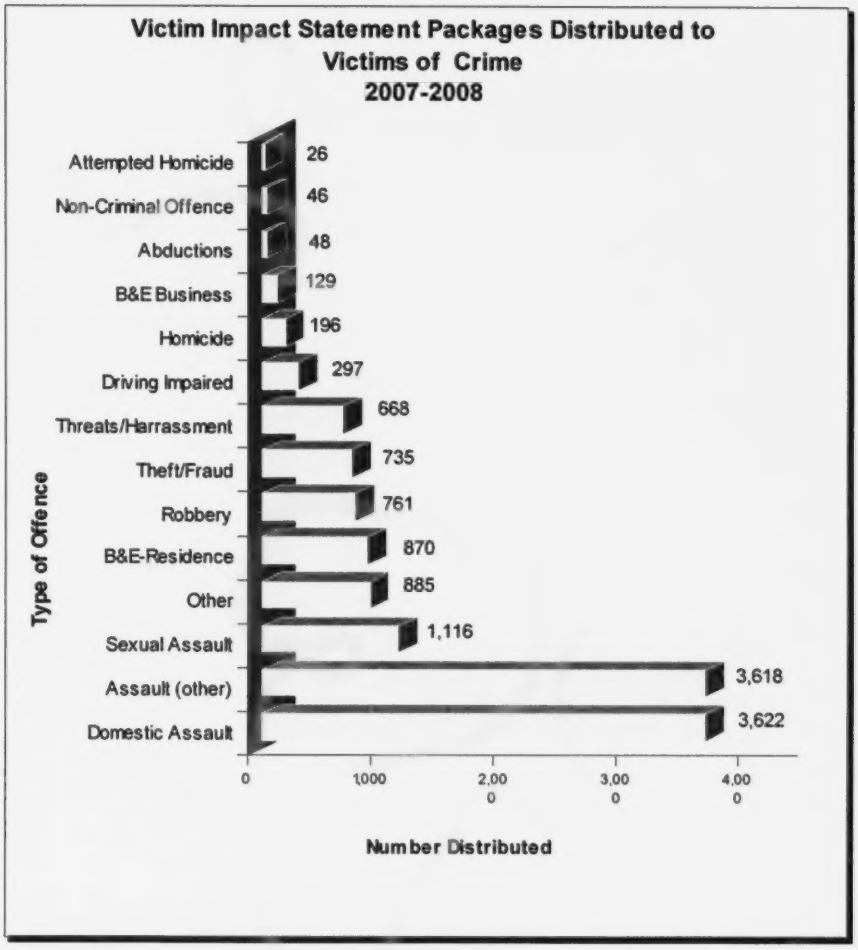
As a result of guideline changes, beginning April 1, 2005, victim service programs began tracking the number of Victim Impact Statement packages they distributed to victims, and the number of Victim Impact Statement Notification Forms forwarded to the Clerk of the Court and the Crown prosecutor's office.

In fiscal year 2007-2008, victim service programs reported the distribution of 13,017 Victim Impact Statement packages to crime victims in Alberta ***(Figure 7).*** Victim service programs completed 4,659 Victim Impact Statement Notification Forms and forwarded them to the Clerk of the Court and Crown Prosecutors' offices, after charges had been laid.

Victim Impact Statement Program

Victim Impact Statement packages were most often distributed by victim service programs in relation to *domestic assault* (3,622), followed by *assault (other)* (3,618) and *sexual assault* (1,116).

Figure 7

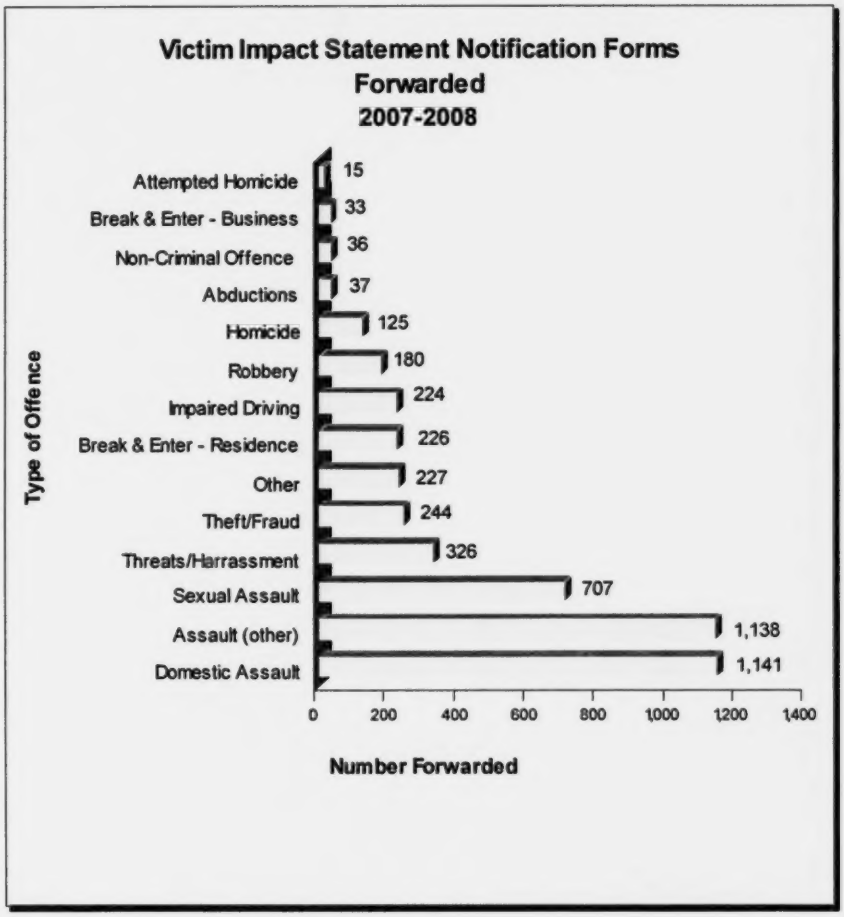


The least number of Victim Impact Statement packages were distributed in cases of *attempted homicide* (27), *non-criminal offence* (49) and *abductions* (48).

Victim Impact Statement Program

The three categories of offences which saw the most Victim Impact Statement Notification Forms forwarded were *domestic assault* (1,141), *assault (other)* (1,138) and *sexual assault* (707). The least number were

Figure 8



The least number were forwarded in cases of *non-criminal offence* (36), *break and enter - business* (33) and *attempted homicide* (15) ***(Figure 8).***

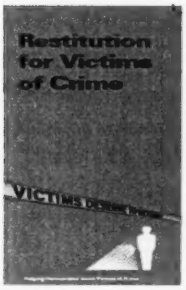
JUSTICE ONLINE INFORMATION NETWORK

Justice Online Information Network

The Justice on-line Information Network (JOIN) supports the criminal litigation activities of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Divisions of Alberta Justice, as well as partners in federal, provincial and municipal enforcement and correctional agencies throughout the province. JOIN allows users to track persons who have been charged with *Criminal Code* offences in Alberta as they work their way through the Court system.

In 2007 Alberta Justice and Attorney General agreed to provide JOIN access to victim service coordinators situated within RCMP detachments to track offender court dates. In prior years only municipal and First Nations police service victim service units had this access. This direct access to JOIN allows the victim service units to provide updates on court appearance dates and court dispositions to victims in a timely fashion.

Requesting Restitution Program

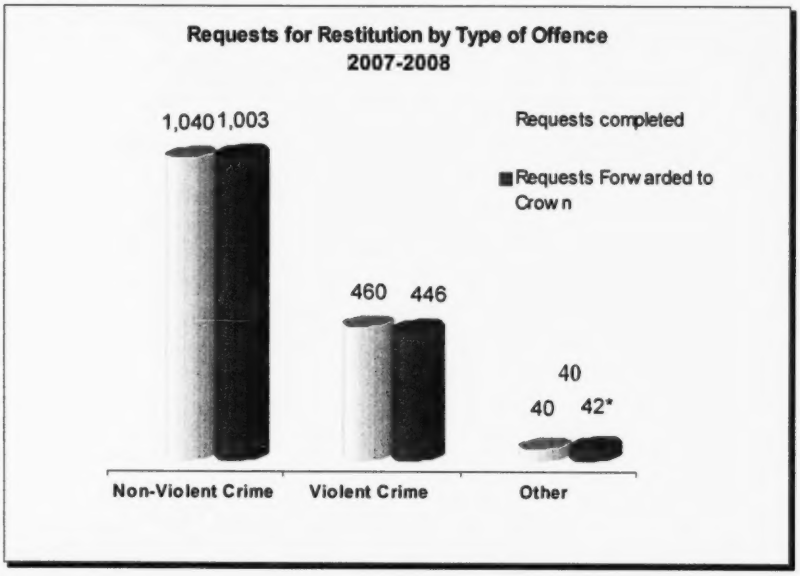


The Requesting Restitution Program provides victims of crime who have suffered a financial loss with information about how they can request that the offender pay restitution. A crime victim may complete a Request for Restitution Form provided by the investigating police officer or a victim services worker. Once the form is completed, the victim returns it to police for forwarding to the Crown Prosecutor. Upon review, the Crown Prosecutor may make the application for restitution to the Court, or may decline to do so. If the Crown declines, the victim may request the court to order restitution.

Restitution may be ordered for:

- damage
- destruction and loss of property
- psychological and/or bodily harm
- expenses incurred in moving out of an offender's residence in spousal abuse cases
- for losses incurred by unknowingly purchasing or lending money on stolen property

Figure 9



On May 23, 2006 Bil C-49, *"trafficking in persons"* amendments to the *Criminal Code* came in to effect which expanded the ability to seek restitution to all victims who are subjected to psychological as well as bodily harm.

For the 2007-2008 period, 1,540 Requests for Restitution were completed and returned to police and of these, 1,491 were forwarded to the Crown after charges were laid. These figures represent a decrease of 2% and an increase of 3%, respectively, from the last reporting year. The majority of the Requests for Restitution forwarded to the Crown concerned *Non-Violent Crime*. The next largest category was *Violent Crime* followed by *Other* ***(Figure 9).***

Victim Advocate Training Manual

Solicitor General and Public Security distributes the *Victim Advocate Training Manual* to victim service organizations throughout Alberta. The Manual establishes a provincial standard for victim advocate training and creates an opportunity for victim advocates to become certified in victim services. In 2007-2008, 211 victim service advocates and program coordinators received certification.

Victim Assistance Coordinator Training

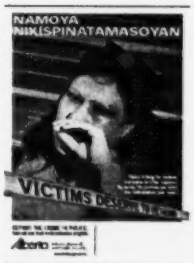
In 2007-2008, 60 participants attended the Victim Assistance Coordinators' Training held in February, 2008. Training sessions were delivered to victim service program coordinators, victim advocates, police officers, Court Services staff, Crown Prosecutors and Criminal Justice staff, Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security staff, Department of National Defense staff, and Aboriginal representatives. The training provided information about the criminal justice system, federal and provincial legislation concerning victims of crime, and information about related programs assisting victims in Alberta.

In addition to Victim Assistance Coordinator's Training, Victims Programs introduced two new training initiatives:

- An Advanced Coordinators' Training Course was held in November 2007 and included topics on hate crimes, victims of homicide, Human Rights, Bill C-2 (amendments to protect children and other vulnerable persons), human trafficking, and elder abuse. Evaluations demonstrated that 95% of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the training.

- An Aboriginal Awareness Training Curriculum was developed in partnership with the Advisory Committee consisting of coordinators, Elders, RCMP, Aboriginal Justice Initiatives and Program Support. Training will be held in the upcoming fiscal year and will include sessions on history, Indian Residential Schools, Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, traditional feasts and cultural entertainment.

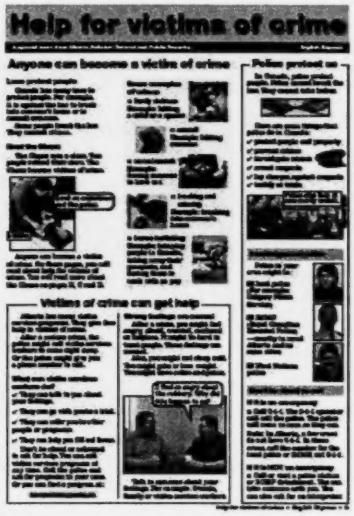
Public Awareness Campaign



Phase three of the public Victims of Crime Awareness campaign was implemented in 2007-2008, and focused on reaching Aboriginal victims of crime and a broader continuum of professionals who may come into contact with crime victims. This phase included Aboriginal radio ads which were aired on selected radio stations across Alberta. Print ads, some in Cree, were published in professional papers, medical magazines and Aboriginal publications. The Victims of Crime Awareness campaign utilizes the tagline "**Victims Deserve to be Heard**" to highlight that victims do have a voice and a role in the criminal justice system.

English Express Newspaper

The English Express newspaper is designed for adults who are improving their English reading skills and is used in English as a second language and adult literacy programs. During 2007-2008, Solicitor General and Public Security partnered with English Express and Alberta Advanced Education and Technology to create a special edition titled *Help for Victims of Crime*. Other stakeholders involved in victims issues also provided assistance to the project.


Help for victims of crime

Anyone can become a victim of crime

Police protect us

Victims of crime can get help

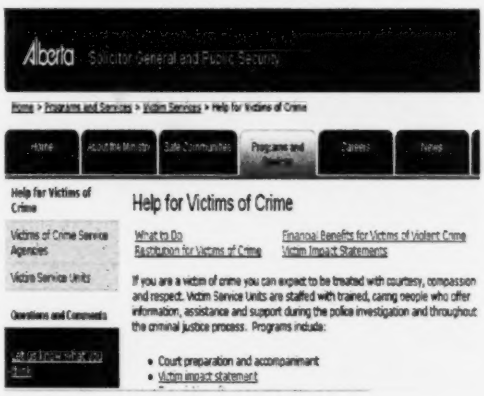
The purpose of the special edition was to create program awareness and provide information to the Province's growing immigrant population. The April 2008 newspaper depicted crime victims experiencing a violent incident, reporting the crime to police, receiving services from their local victim services program, and participating in the criminal justice process.

Victims of Crime Website

The Solicitor General and Public Security Victims of Crime website contains a wide range of information on victims' programs and services in Alberta including:

- Help for victims of crime
- Financial Benefits Program
- Victims of Crime Fund Grant Program
- Victim Impact Statement
- Requesting Restitution
- Branch publications
- Contact information for Victim Service Units, Community Programs, and the Victims Services Branch, Solicitor General and Public Security.

The website address is: **www.victims.alberta.ca**


Alberta
Solicitor General and Public Security
Home > Programs and Services > Victim Services > Help for Victims of Crime
Help for Victims of Crime
Victims of Crime Service Agencies
Victim Service Units
Questions and Comments
Help for Victims of Crime
What to Do
Restitution for Victims of Crime
Financial Benefits for Victims of Violent Crime
Victim Impact Statements
If you are a victim of crime you can expect to be treated with courtesy, compassion and respect. Victim Service Units are staffed with trained, caring people who offer information, assistance and support during the police investigation and throughout the criminal justice process. Programs include:
• Court preparation and accompaniment
• Victim impact statement

Contact Information

CONTACT US

For additional information, contact
Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security at:

Victims Programs
Public Security Division
Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security
10th Floor, John E. Brownlee Building
10365 – 97 Street
Edmonton AB T5J 3W7

Phone: 780-427-3460 (local calls) or
310-0000 (toll-free within Alberta) or through our web-site at:
www.victims.alberta.ca

Appendix A

VICTIMS SERVICES BRANCH ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
2007-2008